



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney A. Brian Albritton  
Middle District of Florida

Tampa                      Orlando  
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**U.S. ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES ASSET FORFEITURE RECOVERIES**  
**FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009 AS WELL AS AMOUNT RETURNED**  
**TO VICTIMS AND SHARED WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT**

\_\_\_\_\_Tampa, FL- U.S. Attorney A. Brian Albritton announced today that in fiscal year 2009 more than \$43 million in cash and property was recovered by the United States Attorney's Office, Asset Forfeiture Section, in the Middle District of Florida and the federal law enforcement agencies through the Department of Justice's Asset Forfeiture Program. Approximately \$17 million was used to compensate crime victims. Approximately \$7.4 million was shared with local and state law enforcement agencies as well as the federal law enforcement agencies which participate in the Department of Treasury's Asset Forfeiture Program (see attached charts).

"Working with our partners in local, state, and federal law enforcement, we have shown that crime does not pay. It is rewarding to see ill-gotten gains reallocated and being used to compensate victims and support law enforcement," stated U.S. Attorney Albritton. U.S. Attorney Albritton also congratulated the Asset Forfeiture Section for doubling the amount of cash and property forfeited this year when compared with last year and applauded the Section's commitment to using asset forfeiture laws to recover assets for the benefit of victims.

The Department of Justice's Asset Forfeiture Program (*hereinafter* the Program) is a nationwide law enforcement program that continues to be an effective and powerful weapon in the Department's fight against crime. More than two hundred forfeiture laws

have been enacted to fight against organized crime, drug trafficking, money laundering, and other illegal activities. Thousands of federal prosecutors, investigators, property managers, and support staff are involved in the seizure and forfeiture process to achieve the Program's objectives. As part of the historical development, thousands of state and local law enforcement officials work cooperatively with their federal counterparts in the investigation and prosecution of criminal cases to strip criminals of their ill-gotten gains.

## **Background**

Forfeiture is of ancient origin; it can be traced back to biblical times. The forfeiture of instrumentalities of illegal activity has been a part of American jurisprudence since the Colonial period. Historically, governments have recognized the need to protect their citizens against persons both inside and outside their borders who smuggle contraband into their territory. The First Congress enacted laws in 1789 subjecting vessels and cargoes to civil forfeiture for violations of the Customs laws. By arresting the captain and crew of a foreign smuggling ship and returning the ship to its owner, little was accomplished. The owner merely hired a new crew and sent the ship back on another smuggling run. Obvious parallels exist between age-old smuggling and modern-day drug trafficking—they both require methods to protect our citizens from criminals inside and outside our borders. With the emergence of illicit drug trafficking and organized crime, asset forfeiture has become an increasingly vital weapon in the United States' anti-crime arsenal.

## **Asset Forfeiture Mission**

The mission of the Department of Justice Asset Forfeiture Program is to use asset forfeiture consistently and strategically to disrupt and dismantle criminal enterprises, deprive wrongdoers of the fruits and instrumentalities of criminal activity, deter crime, and restore property to the crime victims while protecting individual rights. Illegal organizations—large and small—are enhanced by the profits and proceeds obtained through illicit activity. Illegal enterprises are damaged or destroyed by seizing and forfeiting their accumulated wealth. Accordingly, the Program is committed to dismantling criminal organizations by means of depriving drug traffickers, racketeers, and other criminal syndicates of their ill-gotten proceeds and the instrumentalities of their trade; and to enhance law enforcement and intergovernmental cooperation among federal, state, local, and foreign law enforcement agencies through the equitable sharing of forfeiture proceeds.